

REF: WoE4

Lisa Bartlett

SRO for the JSP

17th September 2018

Robert Young
JSP Examination Programme officer

Dear Robert,

West of England Joint Spatial Plan: Councils' Response to Inspectors letter's ED03 and ED04

Please will you thank the Inspectors for the further letters of 1st (ED03) and 28th August (ED04).

We confirm that the additional technical work as set out in our letter of 23rd July is being progressed. In keeping with our approach through the preparation of the Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) and statutory requirements for consultation, this additional technical work will be published from 12th November with the opportunity for comments to be received by 21st December.

We have set out the West of England Councils' response to the Inspectors' questions of 1st August in the table attached (WoE3).

With respect to the matters raised in the Inspectors Letter of 28th August, we would draw the Inspectors attention to paragraphs 33 and 34 of the Joint Spatial Plan General Paper, April 2018(SD4). This should be read alongside our response to the five points raised by the Inspectors as follows.

The current timetable for preparation, publication and examination of the Mayoral Spatial Strategy

Councils' response

As identified in ED04, in May 2018, the duty on the Combined Authority Mayor to prepare a Spatial Development Strategy was enacted. There is currently no published timetable for preparing the Mayoral Spatial Strategy.

The Mayoral Spatial Strategy will follow the Combined Authorities (Spatial Development Strategy) Regulation (2018) procedural requirements including a minimum consultation of 12 weeks.

The likely lifespan of the Joint Spatial Plan for Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire

Councils' response

The JSP DPD covers the period 2016 to 2036. Subject to appropriate reviews, as required by the new NPPF, the JSP will provide the strategic planning policy framework to bring forward the West of England councils' respective local plans. For clarification, this will also include North Somerset Council.

Subject to the Plan being adopted in 2019, the first review will need to take place by 2024. As set out at paragraph 33 of SD4, in the West of England this first review will be linked to the requirement for the preparation of a Mayoral Spatial Strategy for the Combined Authority of Bristol, South Gloucestershire and Bath & North East Somerset.

Given the officer time and resources, and the considerable political capital that has been invested to reach the JSP examination stage, the scope of the Mayoral Spatial Strategy is still being considered however, it will be informed by progress on the Joint Spatial Plan. The Combined Authority (Spatial Development Strategy) Regulations 2018, which makes provision for the form, content and procedure for spatial development strategies produced by the Mayor of the West of England Combined Authority (WECA), do not restrict the scope of this document to a specific aspect of development. The Mayoral Spatial Strategy could encompass therefore a wider framework for spatial development within the region, which incorporates and supports the growth outlined within the JSP and enables delivery of wider infrastructure investment and strategic development for the West of England.

The JSP as a statutory Development Plan Document will be reviewed in line with the regulation requirements. The role of the Mayoral Spatial Strategy (MSS) could be a mechanism related to that review depending on the scope agreed. WECA confirms that: the timetable for the Mayoral Spatial Strategy will fully compliment the review of the JSP; that the outcomes of Mayoral Spatial Strategy will not hinder the development of the JSP; and will be informed by the firm foundation of the JSP. The MSS will be consistent with the Mayor's priorities which are focused around delivery, as set out in the WECA Business Plan where the JSP is confirmed as a key component of the strategic policy framework for the West of England.

The implications of the above for the preparation, examination and adoption of the Local Plans for Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire.

Councils' response

As a strategic DPD, the JSP provides the overarching strategic planning policy framework; to support housing and employment growth being brought forward by the West of England councils' respective local plans and to ensure these plans remain in general conformity

(Regulation 8 of the 2012 Regulations). For clarification this would also include North Somerset Council which is not listed as an authority in your question.

The implications of the above for North Somerset which would be covered by the Joint Spatial Plan but not by the Mayoral Spatial Strategy

Councils' response

North Somerset Council, alongside the other three Unitary Authorities, is a committed and equal partner in preparing the JSP. This is confirmed through the joint memorandum of understanding (MoU) commitment of March 2014 to engage in statutory plan-making process, and to formalise this approach to co-operate on strategic planning matters. The JSP was endorsed at the West of England Joint Committee on 30th October 2017, which included all four authorities and was subsequently approved for the Publication and Submission to the Secretary of State by the four councils in November 2017. Accordingly, the JSP provides the statutory basis to ensure all four councils' housing, employment and strategic infrastructure needs are met and the Duty to Co-operate is fulfilled.

Joint plan making is intended to be continued throughout the JSP review process. As required at the time this review is undertaken, the status of North Somerset Council will also be considered and appropriate arrangements considered for how the five authorities can continue to ensure their requirements to work on cross boundary strategic planning matters can most effectively be undertaken.

Whether or not the Councils consider there are any implications of the above for the soundness of the Joint Spatial Plan

Councils' response

The four West of England councils are working jointly to prepare the JSP, which when adopted will provide the strategic planning policy framework for growth to bring forward the West of England councils' respective local plans and to ensure these plans remain in general conformity. The JSP is being prepared as a statutory DPD in accordance with the 2012 Town and Country Planning Regulations. The JSP is a four-council led project that has gone through a democratic process. The councils are the planning authorities for the West of England. The Combined Authority is keen to support and build on the JSP and ensure economic development. However, the scope for the MSS is not limited to a review of the JSP and a number of options are being considered to ensure that the MSS builds on and complements the JSP. It is intended therefore that the Mayoral Spatial Strategy will play a complementary role to the JSP; when its final scope and purpose are agreed. Accordingly, there are no implications relating to the soundness of the JSP.

Yours Sincerely

Lisa Bartlett
SRO JSP